(e) if so, the steps taken to avoid such accident in future?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI BANDARU DATTATRAYA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Commissioner of Railway Safety, Eastern Circle, in his Final Report, has concluded that the accident occurred due to "opening of fish plates and elastic rail clips of accident falls under the category of "Sabotage".

(c) 107 passengers lost their lives including, 22 Railway staff, 60 suffered grievous injury and 105 suffered simple injuries. The cost of railway property damanged has been assessed as Rs. 9,42,18,000.

(d) No, Sir. Best possible medical and allied care was provided to affected passengers.

(e) Does not arise.

Fish Plates causing accidents

433. SHRI RUMANDLA RAMACHANDRAIAH:
DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:
SHRI B. J. PANDA:
SHRI KRIPAL PARMAR:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item published in Times of India dated 3rd October, 2002 under the caption "Rail Safety report gathering dust";

(b) if so, whether the second volume of the Justice Khanna Railways Safety Review Committee report submitted in 2001, which provides a long term perspective on safe rail travel has not been accepted by the Railways:

(c) what is holding up implementation of these recommendations;

(d) whether two rail accidents, one in May and another in September, 2002, occurred due to missing of fish-plates;

(e) if so, whether the Ministry constituted five member high-level committee to go into the rail accident of Rajdhani Express; and

(f) if so, the action taken on the Report?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI BANDARU DATTATRAYA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) No, Sir. 83 of the 128 recommendations made in Part-II of the Report of Railway Safety Review Committee-98 (Khanna Committee) have been accepted fully or partially by the Ministry of Railways. 36 recommendations are under scrutiny, whereas 9 recommendations could not be accepted for various reasons.

(d) Yes, Sir. The accidents involving derailments of 2402 Down Shramjeevi Express on 12.5.2002 at about 3.35 hrs on Lucknow Division and that of 2301 UP Rajdhani Express near Rafiganj on 9.9.2002 at about 22.39 hrs, have been attributed to 'sabotage' by the Commissioner of Railway Safety.

(e) No, Sir.

(f) Does not arise.

Rail link for backward regions

434. SHRI S.S. CHANDRAN: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that most of the backward districts in the country, especially Ramanathapuram and Sivaganga districts in Tamil Nadu, are not properly connected with rail routes; and

(b) if so, the details of Government's proposal to have rail links in all backward regions of our country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI BANDARU DATTATRAYA): (a) and (b) There is a vast network of Railway lines throughout the Country covering backward and remote areas. Ramanathapuram and Siraganga are existing stations on Tiruchchirappalli-Karaikudi-Manamadurai-Rameshwaram MG line. A large number of new lines and gauge conversion projects are also under progress on socio-economic consideration for development of backward and remote areas. Details of ongoing projects are available in the Budget documents.